

COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY  
DEPUTY RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON  
OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1802**

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April 28, 2010

The Honorable James Oberstar  
Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Ranking Member  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boozman  
Ranking Member  
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee  
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-375 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Oberstar, Chairwoman Johnson, Ranking Member Mica, and Ranking Member Boozman:

On April 20, 2010, the semisubmersible drilling rig, the *Deepwater Horizon*, caught fire during drilling operations and has since sunk in the Gulf of Mexico. The rig was in the process of capping a well in the Gulf of Mexico located approximately 40 miles off the Louisiana coast. While rescue efforts have been heroic and sustained, eleven people remain missing and are feared lost and three were critically injured. Additionally, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) reportedly said that, if the leaks from this oil well are not stemmed soon, it could result in one of the worst spills in U.S. history.

This tragic incident raises a number of critical and fundamental issues that require immediate Congressional attention. As a member of Louisiana delegation to U.S. House of Representatives and as the Louisiana delegation's sole representative on the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I respectfully request you call a hearing to address pressing issues caused by the tragedy. I also have requested the leadership of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to call a hearing to review certification processes at the U.S. Department of Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS), as the rig that malfunctioned had recently been certified.

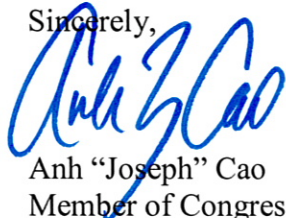
The Honorable James Oberstar  
The Honorable Bernice Johnson  
The Honorable John L. Mica  
The Honorable John Boozman  
April 28, 2010  
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Regarding the oil leak, the environmental effects of this tragedy will be widespread and felt many years into the future. Reports indicate that approximately 1,000 barrels (42,000 gallons) of oil are gushing into the sea each day. A nearby oil platform recently was evacuated by U.S. authorities as the slick – estimated to have a circumference of approximately 600 miles and to cover approximately 28,600 miles sq – rapidly was approaching. A spill of this size will have a significant environmental impact on the animals and the coastline of Louisiana and neighboring Gulf Coast states.

The slick is currently approximately 20 miles off the coast of Louisiana and is expected to reach land as early as this Saturday. The USCG themselves have already noted the potentially devastating impact on Louisiana's coastline, which contains some 40 percent of the nation's wetlands and is the spawning grounds for countless species of fish and birds. Whatever cleanup and other action is taken will have a direct affect on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers restoration and storm protection projects for which billions of taxpayer dollars have been allocated. Additionally, the controlled burn currently underway to stop the oil from spreading could create a black plume of smoke, the long-term effects of which are currently unknown. To ensure these issues are expressly understood and addressed, I respectfully request a hearing to consider the environmental impacts of this catastrophe on the coastline along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to include any potential effects of the federal government's containment attempts.

I appreciate your consideration of this urgent and important request and look forward to discussing this with you at your earliest convenience. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff, Monica Sanders, or me at (202) 225-6636.

Sincerely,



Anh "Joseph" Cao  
Member of Congress